



83RD DISTRICT  
STATE CAPITOL  
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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**SHANE HERNANDEZ**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee  
Michigan Senate  
100 N Capitol Ave  
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to encourage your support of HCR 14 and to share with my colleagues the inspirational story of Sgt. Thomas Henry Sheppard.

Sgt. Sheppard was a Civil War flag bearer and rode four lengths behind General Custer during Pickett's charge. He was wounded and captured by the Confederate army at Gettysburg and spent 505 days in Confederate internment camps. During this time, Sgt. Sheppard kept the flag hidden by wrapping it around his torso, under his clothing.

Sgt. Sheppard returned home with the flag, which had 72 bullet holes in it, all of which are believed to have been a result of field action. He was very proud of the flag and once said if he had to choose between his farm or the flag, he would have to give up the farm.

This flag was made in the 83<sup>rd</sup> District, in the community of Marlette and Sgt Sheppard has decedents scattered throughout MI. The flag resides today in the Dearborn Historical Museum, where they consider it to be the crown jewel of their collection.

At least 62 Medals of Honor have been awarded for protecting the flag and dozens more were awarded for capturing an enemy flag during the civil war. I ask my colleagues to join me today in supporting this resolution to memorialize congress to posthumously award the Medal of Honor to Sgt. Thomas Henry Sheppard for his heroic acts in protecting our great flag.

Sincerely,

Shane Hernandez  
State Representative  
83<sup>rd</sup> House District

August 23, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of family members Carol Ingells, Melissa Benmark, Betsy Johnson, Dave Burns, Linda Moore, Robin Weir, and myself. Sandra L. Burns, each of whom has approved the application for the posthumous awarding of the Medal of Honor to Sgt. Thomas Henry Sheppard.

My Grandmother, Nellie Uhlinger, my Mother, Marguerite Copeland, and Sgt. Sheppard's grandson, Lawrence Sheppard were instrumental in keeping the story of my great grandfather's life alive and available to his descendants.

My children say they have friends who would be thrilled to have such knowledge of their ancestors.

Thomas Henry Sheppard came to America from Bristol, England in 1854 "joining those courageous men and women who came to this country in search of personal freedom, economic opportunity and a future of hope for their families" [quote from the certificate registering THS in the American Immigrant Wall of Honor at Ellis Island in 1991.] To this day, over five or so generations, our family is honored and edified by the immigrant Michigan farmer who became our family hero. His courage and dedication are a source of ongoing deep interest and pride - a high standard he set.

Against amazing odds, Sgt. Sheppard and the Flag he was charged with displaying during battle, came back to Michigan together. Grandson, Lawrence Sheppard finally had possession of the Flag...but only in trust...for he recognized that it was far more than a tattered piece of colored fabric; rather a symbol of high courage and sacrifice which belonged to everyone! Thanks to the Dearborn Historical Museum, that Flag is on display. Seeing this wonderful old Flag with its 72 bullet holes, has made many family members grateful his life was miraculously spared.

My grandmother offered me several artifacts belonging to Sgt. Sheppard, including the small brown New Testament he carried throughout the Civil War, a GAR button from his army coat, and a powder horn. In the 1960's she gave my husband and me the large elaborately framed photograph of Grandfather which had hung in *her* house for 70 years. These are treasures!

It might seem rather odd, in the light of this man's story, that the family never really considered campaigning for this honor. It is now our tender task. We feel Sgt. Thomas Henry Sheppard is deserving of receiving the Honor. It would mean so much to his family!

For all the Thos. H. Sheppard family,

*Sandra L. Burns*  
Sandra Burns

**Rep. Shane Hernandez (District 83)**

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**From:** Debbie Lotito <debbeelotito@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 13, 2017 3:14 PM  
**To:** senvgregory@senate.michigan.gov  
**Cc:** Rep. Shane Hernandez (District 83)  
**Subject:** I am a constituent from your district asking for support for Civil War hero Thomas H. Sheppard (my relative)

Dear Senator Vincent Gregory,

My name is Debbie Lotito (nee: Sheppard). I am a constituent from your district.

I'm writing to introduce myself and to also let you know that Shane Hernandez, the Republican State Rep. from the thumb area, may contact your office to get your support for a bill regarding a metal of honor for my relative and Michigan war hero Thomas H Sheppard. (The bill is going to the floor Aug 15th or 16th).

I am a relative of the Civil War hero Thomas H Sheppard from the Company L, First Cavalry. My family is trying to get Thomas a metal of honor for his heroic efforts in the Civil War. Shane Hernandez, is looking to have in-state family members of Thomas Sheppard call their district rep for their support too.

Here is the story of Thomas Henry Sheppard:

Sgt. Thomas H Sheppard was the Color Guard (flag bearer) During the famous battle of Gettysburg, with General Custer leading Thomas H Sheppard's regiment, my 4th great grandfather charged into battle with his flag in hand. During the conflict, Thomas was stabbed with a saber and passed out from the pain. After regaining consciousness and realizing there was no way out, Thomas took his flag off the post and hid it under his clothing. He was imprisoned for 505 days in multiple Confederate prisons including the famous Andersonville Prison. During this time, Thomas managed to keep the flag hidden from the enemy. He was eventually released on prisoner exchange and brought his proud flag home where it is now on display at the Dearborn Historical Museum in Dearborn, Mi.

Thomas is a hero to our family. He was a courageous man who made many sacrifices for his newly found country including hardship on his family, life-long injuries in war, imprisonment in the South where he survived the famous Andersonville Prison (where many Union soldiers died), and his courageous act of saving his Civil War flag at all costs!

Your support means a lot to me. Thank you for your time,

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